

An Impact and Challenges of Sustainable Development in Global Era

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Abstract

Sustainable development means attaining a balance between environmental protection and human economic development and between the present and future needs. It means equity in development and sectoral actions across space and time. It requires an integration of economic, social and environmental approaches towards development. The research highlights the importance of sustainable development in the global era. Human development is essentially what sustainability advocates want to sustain and without sustainability, human development is not true human development. In the last half of the twentieth century, four key themes emerged from the collective concerns and aspirations of the world's peoples: peace, freedom, development, and environment. The peace that was thought to be secured in the postwar world of 1945 was immediately threatened by the nuclear arms race. Freedom was sought early in the post-war world in the struggle to end imperialism; to halt totalitarian oppression; and later to extend democratic governance, human rights, and the rights of women, indigenous peoples, and minorities. Finally, it is only in the past 40 years that the environment (local to global) became a key focus of national and international law and institutions. Although reinterpreted over time, peace, freedom, development, and the environment remain prominent issues and aspirations.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Indicators of Sustainability Goals and Challenges of Sustainable Development, Human Development Index

Introduction

Enabling everyone to be capable and free to do things and be the person they want to be is the goal of human development. As mentioned in the introduction, human development is in principle what sustainability proponents want to sustain.

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'Sustainable development' has been defined best by the Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1985) as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development marked a further expansion of the standard definition with the widely used three pillars of Sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. The Johannesburg Declaration created "a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development—economic development, social development and environmental protection—at local, national, regional and global levels."¹

Sustainability

"The possibility that human and other forms of life on earth will flourish forever."

– John Ehrenfeld, Professor Emeritus, MIT

Sustainable Development (SD)

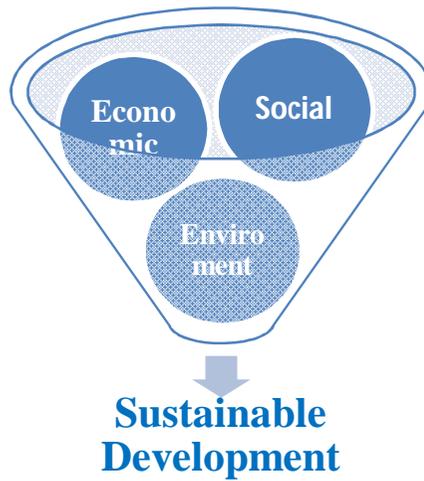
"Enough - for all – forever."

– African Delegate to Johannesburg (Rio+10)

The Three Pillars of Sustainable Development

At the core of sustainable development is the need to consider **"three pillars" together: society, the economy and the environment**. No matter the context, the basic idea remains the same – people, habitats and economic systems are inter-related.

We may be able to ignore that interdependence for a few years or decades, but history has shown that before long we are reminded of it by some type of alarm or crisis.



Sustainable Development is Therefore

- **A conceptual framework:** A way of changing the predominant world view to one that is more holistic and balanced;
- **A process:** A way of applying the principles of integration – across space and time – to all decisions; and
- **An end goal:** Identifying and fixing the specific problems of resource depletion, health care, social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, etc.

Goals of Sustainable Development

The United Nations, the World Bank and the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) have identified six goals for sustainable human development.

1. Poverty Reduction

To reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by half by 2015.

2. Universal Education

To achieve universal primary education for all by 2015.

3. Gender equality

To demonstrate progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015.

4. Reduced Mortality Rates

To reduce infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds and maternal mortality rates by three-quarters by 2015.

5. Reproductive Health

To provide access to reproductive health services to all individuals of appropriate age by 2015.

6. Environment

To implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 to ensure the current loss of environmental resources is reversed globally by 2015.²

Sustainable Development Determinants of Sustainable Development

- Consumption
- Production
- Distribution

Principles of Sustainable Development

Harmony between man and nature is prerequisite for sustainable development. It depicts that development of humanity should not be on cost of environmental health. Thus, whatever the path of development is adopted does not matter but it should always within such limit nature allows penetrating beyond that will ultimately cause a threat of survival.

To quote the words of former Prime Minister of India, Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi at the Stockholm Conference in 1972 "Higher standard of living must be achieved without disposing nature of its beauty, freshness and purity, so essential to our lives". For the sake of universe and humanity following are the principles of development with no damage i.e. Sustainable Development:

1. Holistic Development: Considering all the biotic and abiotic material while planning for development. It should have holistic View.
2. Development within the boundary of environment: Equilibrium among various eco-systems can resist only to certain amount of pressure in form of natural resource use, ill atmospheric composition, over exploitation of any components and so on. Thus, prior to going for exploitation of natural resources, do have adequate knowledge about composition and interrelation between and among the constituent factors of environment.
3. Development within socio-cultural and traditional – knowledge base: In the era of scientific revolution, the world of social value, norms and traditional knowledge cannot be denied by saying that it became out dated because these are irrational. Now the question is if these were irrational than why the innovators took these as base for innovations? Why so-called scientific innovations have created various hazards?
4. Enhance quality of life: Not only human life but life of other living macro and microorganism because they contribute according to their capacity for balanced growth of environment.
5. Promote collectiveness: In third world countries where the number of working hands are comparatively more, are greatly affected by the automation and use of highly sophisticated! Equipments devioded the so much energy to be waste. Thus the development strategies should enumerate the facts and do plan for promotion of work for all.
6. Needs of the future generation: Development should not be at the expense of forthcoming generation. Here the share fairly and care' need to be materialized. All the benefits and costs incurred in resources use and management must be equitably distributed among poor and affluent, concerned and non-concerned and among various subgroups and communities. Therefore, this principle leads us towards socially just and equitable distribution of benefits and costs.
7. Global diversity: Conservation based development needs to include deliberate action to protect and maintain the global diversity keeping in view the sale of extinction of various animal and plant species, immediate action should be taken at the earliest.
8. People's participation and empowering to manage their surrounding and natural resources: Development should encourage people's participation and make them capable to manage their resources.

9. Based on national policy and needs: All developmental efforts should be in line with the National policies and needs.
10. Least energy and judicious use of resources: Development should consume least energy and should promote judicious use of resources.³

What are Sustainability Indicators?

The core achievement of the Millennium Declaration was its formal articulation of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**. The MDGs are eight time-bound objectives which range from halving world poverty to cutting child mortality, achieving universal primary education and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The MDGs are now at the heart of the global development agenda. For each goal, one or more targets have been set, mostly for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark.

Indicators have been identified to measure progress against each target. Each goal, with their respective targets and indicators, needs to be adjusted according to the specific country context.

The goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development⁴

The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, put the concept of sustainable development on national and international policy agendas. Since Rio, there have been extensive efforts to operationalize sustainable development by governments, international organizations, local authorities, business, citizen groups and individuals. Agenda 21 remains a powerful document that provides long-term vision for balancing economic and social needs with the capacity of the earth's resources and ecosystems.

Challenges to Sustainable Development

Several challenges threaten progress towards sustainable development goals. The spike in food and energy prices in 2008 led to a severe food crisis. The subsequent fall of energy prices has eased some of the pressure on energy importing countries. Yet, food prices remain high. The global financial and economic crisis in 2009 has exacerbated the situation: Growth rates are falling, unemployment is rising, poverty is deepening, Climate change, heavy population rate, hunger and malnutrition are on the increase again, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is in jeopardy.

Problems of sustainable development are rooted in issues of resource use and their pattern of distribution and ownership. Thus a policy towards sustainable development cannot be framed in isolation to politics and state regulations.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 1975 explains "environmental management implies sustainable development". Since then the challenge as expressed in the Brundtland Report also as 'the process of economic development (which) must be more soundly based on the stock of capital that sustains it.'⁵

Need of the Sustainable Development

In August 2002, South Africa hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Summit wrestled with the problem that huge imbalances in wealth between countries provide the biggest challenge for global development. Mineral deposits are vital to the development of many poorer nations as well as to the continuance of rich countries' lifestyles.

Extracting these sensitively allows these poorer countries to develop their education and health systems and other forms of human and social capital.

The United Nations set out the Millennium Development Goals for the year 2015. These include:

- developing a global partnership for sustainable development
- halving the numbers of people living on less than \$1 a day or suffering from hunger
- ensuring all children complete primary schooling
- halting the spread of AIDS and other major diseases.

Many businesses accept they have a responsibility to work with international bodies (e.g. the United Nations or the World Bank), governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. Sight savers International, Oxfam or Save the Children) and communities worldwide to work towards sustainable development. In mining, this typically involves using natural capital (the rewards from extracting raw materials) to build social and human capital (e.g. schools, hospitals and worthwhile jobs and skills)

Sustainable development strives for reducing poverty and equitable use of resources. The means adopted consist of minimization of depletion of environmental dilapidation, social unsteadiness, economic resources and cultural disorder.

It also aims to use the resources in a judicious way so that present as well future needs be met. Now a day's biggest concern is rapidly diminishing of natural resources, whether it is oil, minerals, energy sources or food etc. Because of the rapid industrialization, natural resources have suffered the most.

Global Environmental Concerns

1. Massive Population Increase
2. Ozone Depletion
3. Climate Change
4. Desertification
5. Deforestation
6. Biodiversity Loss
7. Freshwater Sources
8. Marine Environment Degradation
9. Toxification
10. Acid Rain

The Richest one-Fifth of the World

- Consume 45% of all meat and fish, the poorest fifth 5%.
- Consume 58% of total energy, the poorest fifth less 4%.
- Have 74% of all telephone lines, the poorest fifth 1.5%.
- Consume 84% of all paper, the poorest fifth 1.1%.
- Own 87% of the world's vehicles, the poorest fifth less than 1%.

Five Basic Causes of Environmental Problems

- Population growth
- Unsustainable resource use
- Poverty
- Excluding environmental costs from market prices
- Trying to manage nature without knowing enough about it

A World Overview

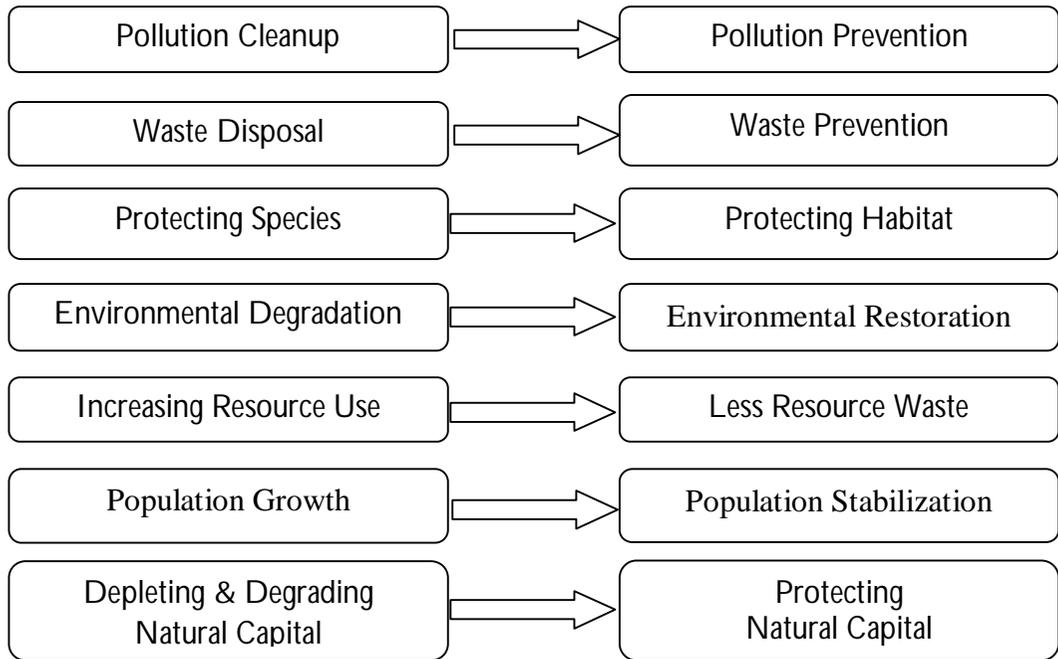
Indicator	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Population	18%	82%
Population Growth	0.1%	1.5%
Life Expectancy	77 Years	66 Years
Wealth Income	85%	15%
Resource Use	88%	12%
Pollution and Waste	75%	25%

We are also constantly struggling with environmental issues. World has taken notice to this grave scenario and has started to address the issue by focusing upon economic as well as environmental and socio-political sustainability so that future generations can meet their demands.

Different means of energy conservation, alternate energy resources, nature protection and equal distribution of income have been taken to ensure sustainable economic development.^{6,7}

Learning to Live More Sustainably

Learning to Live More Sustainably



The long term goals of education for a sustainable future include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote understanding of the interdependence of natural, socio-economic and political systems at local, national and global levels. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage critical reflection and decision making that is reflected in personal lifestyles. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage the active participation of the citizenry in building sustainable development. |

Summary and Conclusion

Environment has emerged as a dominant force influencing development-planning efforts. Sustainable development is the process of judicious use and conservation of natural resources for the overall improvement in the quality of life for the present and future generation on long term basis.

It should be based on principles like Development for all which must be within the limits of environment, having respect for quality of life, taking into account the socio-cultural and traditional knowledge base which promote collectiveness global diversity, people's participation in natural resources management and need for future generations. It should be placed at the top priority while formulating plans for development.

Principles of sustainable development require the current generations to meet their own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same (United Nations, 1987). Building industry, a significant contributor to the environmental problems, needs to evaluate these relatively new principles and how they can be applied within. Realizing the boundaries was the first step toward a more sustainable future. Now it is time for humans to proceed with the remaining steps to truly achieve sustainability for both current and future generations.

“The earth has enough for every man’s need, but not for every man’s greed!”
- Mahatma Gandhi

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